

easier to afford things. It is that simple. That is what I like most about it in my State. They want to make it easier to get childcare. They want to make it easier to get healthcare. They want to make it easier for their parents at the moment when they go to assisted living or they need to get someone in to help them, just like my dad, whom we lost this year. He got that long-term care insurance. I don't know why he did it, but he did. I knew the day that his money ran out, and he was going to go on Medicaid because that was there for his safety net. So many families in America know exactly what I am talking about, and what this bill does is build on the safety net we have in place.

So let's remember that. Putting our kids first, our seniors first, our families first, our healthcare first—that is what this is about.

We look forward, over the next few weeks, to getting this bill done and getting it agreed to. To me, it is not always about what those top numbers are and everything you hear on the news; it is for what it is going to mean to the families in my State.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, following the disposition of the motion to discharge, the Senate resume legislative session; that there be 3 hours for debate under the control of Senator LEE or his designee and 1 hour under the control of the majority; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur with an amendment; that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be considered expired, amendment No. 3848 be withdrawn, and the Senate vote on the motion to concur with the amendment; that if the motion to concur with the amendment is agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table without intervening action or debate; further, that upon disposition of the House message with respect to S. 1301, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 259; that if cloture is invoked on the nomination, all postcloture time be considered expired and the Senate vote on the confirmation of the nomination at 5:30 p.m., Monday, October 18.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 410 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—49

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	
Graham	Portman	

NOT VOTING—1

BURR

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). Pursuant to S. Res. 27 and the motion to discharge having been agreed to, the nomination will be placed on the Executive Calendar.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR AMERICANS ACT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

There will now be up to 3 hours of debate under the control of the Senator from Utah, Mr. LEE, or his designee, and 1 hour under the control of the majority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, we are rapidly approaching a milestone in our country, and it is not a good one. We are rapidly approaching \$30 trillion in debt. We are accumulating debt like we

never have at any time in our history. We are actually accumulating debt at the rate of over \$2 million per minute.

Now, some say deficits don't matter. Some on the left say they have this new monetary theory: We can just print it all up. You can all have free stuff. There will be manna from Heaven. And nothing could go wrong; we are just going to give you money. If not \$1,400 checks a month or a year, why don't we give you monthly checks?

That is part of the new plans. The new plans of the \$3½ trillion that we are facing down at this point—that will all be borrowed—is to give people free money; to give people free this, free that. But I think people are smarter than that. I think people know that, ultimately, you don't get anything in life without hard work; you don't get anything in life, really, for free.

Isn't there some kind of ramification to so much borrowed money? When someone comes to you and says or they call you on the phone and they say "Here is a thousand dollars; all you have got to do is sign up for this," most people immediately recoil and they say "Well, that might be a scam. Somebody is going to be ripping me off to say that."

Well, that is sort of the bait-and-switch of the politics we face now. People are saying: We are going to give you free college, free cars, free cell phones, free this, free that. Everything in life will be free. You won't have to work anymore.

The problem is, there are ramifications. Money doesn't grow on trees. Money has got to come from somewhere. So either we borrow it and we become more indebted to foreign countries, we tax people for it, or ultimately the way we fix a lot of our deficit problems is we simply print the money.

So when the Federal Reserve prints the money, as we increase the money supply, the money that we have becomes worth less and less; it loses its purchasing power. This is the insidious tax of inflation.

The interesting thing about it is that inflation is a regressive tax. It doesn't affect everyone the same. In fact, the tax of inflation actually affects the working class, the people of lower incomes, and those on fixed incomes and pensions, retirees—it affects them much worse because they don't have the ability for their income to go up.

So, right now, we are facing 5 percent inflation because of the massive borrowing that, really, both parties instituted in the last year. They decided that the result to the pandemic would be to close everything down, destroy the economy, and then give everyone free money. And, to a large extent, both parties actually did this last year.

Now, this year, the decision has been made by Republicans to say: Whoo, this is so much. We have got to stop. We have got to get people back to work and let the economy recover.

So it has primarily been Democrats this year, but both parties have a certain responsibility to this—at least some members of both parties. But, as the inflation occurs and as this effect is being transmitted to the economy, you find that those who suffer are those who cannot raise their incomes, those who have fixed incomes or low incomes.

One of the things you see here is that, if we have 5-percent inflation, what does that mean?

You say: Well, I don't know. It means I lose my purchasing power by 5 percent next year.

But what if it happens year in and year out for a decade, and you have lost 50 percent of your purchasing power?

It means, to make up for that, you really have to have a 50-percent increase in your wages.

So will wages keep up with inflation?

The dirty little secret is that, in some ways, wages will rise, but maybe they rise an equivalent amount or a little bit less, and you say a decade later: I am not any better off.

And there become people mired and more dependent on government as government gets larger and larger. They think they are getting free stuff, but it is not really free. The allure of something for nothing—this is the allure of socialism. This is a false allure. It is the idea that you are going to be able to get something and you are not going to have to pay for it.

So we have accumulated \$30 trillion in debt. Interest payments have been fairly low over the past decade or so. Interest payments are at about, you know, 1, 2, 2.5 percent, but now interest rates are rising. Even at the low interest rates, our interest rate that we pay each year has grown to about \$300 billion a year.

So, with \$300 billion a year, people say: Well, there is a debt ceiling. If the debt ceiling doesn't come up, we will default, and Wall Street will become hysterical, and there will be a collapse of the stock market.

Well, there doesn't need to be. Nobody is really for spreading disclaim or spreading, you know, chaos among the marketplace. We all want the marketplace to be calm.

How could we calm the marketplace?

Well, what we would say to the marketplace is, we will pay our bills and we are not going to default on our currency. And the way you can pay for your bills is to pay for them with income. We bring in \$3.8 trillion a year in tax revenue. The interest payment is \$300 billion. It is less than we bring in in 1 month. So the annual payment on interest is less than what we bring in in tax revenue in 1 month.

Why can't we pay the interest? Why would we ever not pay the interest on our debt? Why?

Because we are overdrawn and because all the rest of the spending is crowded out by the interest.

We have got plenty of money to pay for the interest. We just don't have

enough left to pay for the cocaine studies with Japanese quail. That is, you know, about a million bucks.

You say: Oh, it is only a million bucks.

Well, they studied Japanese quail to see whether or not Japanese quail on cocaine are more sexually promiscuous.

How did we get to a \$30 trillion debt?

Because there are studies like that littered throughout the budget. In fact, the group that does these studies, the National Science Foundation, we just increased their budget by two-thirds. It was mostly the Democrats, but, once again, many of the Big Government Republicans voted for this too. So we have exploded the National Science Foundation.

Now, was there any warning that the National Science Foundation was one of the most wasteful parts of our government?

Well, yes, since 1972.

There was a Senator at the time named William Proxmire. He was a conservative, or a maverick, Democrat from the Midwest, and he started an award. He called it the Golden Fleece Award. The first award he gave was for a study from the National Science Foundation. It was over a study that was \$50,000. That was when \$50,000 was a lot of money. And the study was to see what makes people happy.

Really?

People were aghast that we were spending \$50,000 on it. He complained, and he gave them a booby prize and a Golden Fleece Award.

And, lo and behold, we are still doing it. The same organization, last year, did a million-and-a-half-dollar study that if you take a selfie of yourself while smiling and then look at the selfie later on, does it make you happy? That cost a million-and-a-half bucks.

Why do people like each other? Why do people fall in love?

These aren't studies for taxpayer dollars. But these are small ticket items. They say: Oh, you could never balance the budget on that.

Well, what about the \$70 million spent on a hotel in Kabul, and the contractor ran off with the money, and it was never built?

What about a \$48 million gas station—no; strike that—natural gas station in a remote area of Afghanistan?

Well, very few, if anybody, in the United States has a car that runs on natural gas.

Why was the U.S. Government building a natural gas station in Afghanistan?

Because we have gone “woke” on the green climate. We are for the green climate. We have got to combat climate change and reduce the carbon footprint of Afghanistan.

Really?

I thought the military was supposed to kill the enemy and defend the country, but we are reducing the carbon footprint in Afghanistan.

Somebody put this up—I think it was Rod Dreher—the other day. It was a little video clip. It was tragic, but somewhat hilarious in its tragicness.

He said: This is when we lost the Afghan war.

It had a picture of a urinal. I think it was by Marcel Duchamp, some Dadaist artist back in, like, 1917, and I guess he thought it would be really hilarious to put a male urinal in a museum and call it art. I don't know if it was really art or if it was a joke, but the thing is they were having these Afghan men and women in robes and veils and everything studying Dadaist art—a male urinal—and asking them what they thought of this. You could see a couple of women just sort of shaking their heads with utter incomprehension.

When we are spending money sending Ph.D.s over to Afghanistan to teach Dadaist art—that a male urinal is somehow art—I think that is why some of them think that we are actually the culture that is in decay, not theirs.

But the thing is we are spending money right and left. The right spends it on military adventures, and the left spends it on welfare, and the compromise that always happens around here is that right comes together with left, and they all agree: Well, you know, we might as well just spend it on both.

So everything goes up. The military budget went up. We already spend more than all of the countries. More than 10 countries combined is our military budget—\$750-some-odd billion. Republicans and Democrats just raised it \$25 billion more.

In the midst of ending a war, where is the peace dividend? What happened?

We ended a war. I thought we would have a little more money left over.

So, today, I tried to take \$6 billion that is supposed to go to the Afghan Reconstruction Fund, to the old Afghan Government. There is no Afghan Government. They have been overrun by the Taliban.

I would love for Americans who are watching this to call me today, at my office, and tell me why the Taliban should get money.

I asked that we take that money away, put it back in the Treasury, and spend some of it on the Iron Dome for Israel, and it was objected to by the Democrats because, by golly, they will spend money, but they don't want to offset it with any spending cuts.

Well, really?

We should have zero dollars being sent to any government in Afghanistan.

I asked Secretary Blinken about this, and his response was: Well, I can't guarantee it, and if they—you know, if they are meeting expectations and they are acting and behaving properly, they might get this money.

Really?

I don't see a scenario or a world in which U.S. taxpayer dollars would be going to the Taliban. It makes utterly no sense at all.

But we have spending that is literally out of control. The only time I have ever heard a Democrat—most of the time, they are honest in that they don't care about the debt. But the only time I have ever heard them say anything about it is when they say: Well, you know, it happens because you cut taxes.

Well, you know, it is verifiably false. You can go back to the Reagan tax cuts, when the rates went from 70 to 50, and then from 50 to 28.

Do you know what happened?

The government got more revenue because, when you tax people less, when you let them keep more of their own money, guess what. Their incentives to produce go up, and the economy grows by leaps and bounds. So when Reagan cut taxes dramatically, the economy responded and grew tremendously.

When we cut taxes in 2017, it was the same thing. It was the same thing: Revenue didn't go down. Revenue went up.

So how did the deficit get worse? Why did the deficit get worse? Was it because we cut taxes in 2017?

No. It was because we piled on the money. We just were spending money like there was no tomorrow.

So, before we got to the extraordinary times we have now, where everything is about COVID and we are just going to spend money like there is no tomorrow, we were borrowing \$1 trillion a year. The main segments of government—Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, food stamps, other welfare, and military—probably comprise three-fourths or more of government.

If you look at that on an annual basis, before you get to the extraordinary binge over the last 2 years, we were already \$1 trillion short every year—\$1 trillion short. So, last year, we added a couple trillion more, and our deficit for the year—for 1 year—was \$3 trillion. We have never, ever borrowed that much.

There are going to be ramifications. You are already seeing some of the ramifications. You are seeing the prices in the grocery store go up; you are seeing the prices at the pump go up; you are seeing sometimes wages go up. But you are also seeing prices rising faster than wages, which often happens in an inflationary cycle.

Some people have trouble comprehending these numbers.

What is a billion? What is a trillion?

Reagan had an analogy he did. He said: If you want to know how big "a billion" is, take thousand-dollar bills and put them in your hand, and when you have them about 4-inches high, you have got \$1 million. But if you want to know how much or how tall a stack of \$1,000 would be if you had \$1 trillion, it would be 60 miles high—over 60 miles high.

That is what kind of money we are talking about. That was to get to a trillion.

So we have \$1 trillion of institutional debt that is added every year, but now

we are talking about a time when they are talking about adding, in one bill, \$3.5 trillion. The bill that they have before us has \$1 billion in spending for every page. Every page of the bill has an extra billion dollars in spending. It is extraordinary. We have never, ever seen anything like this.

What happens when a country destroys its currency?

We have examples in history. In Germany, in 1923, the money was starting to lose its value in about September. A loaf of bread might have cost 100 mark when, before, it cost 1 mark. Two weeks later, it was 1,000 marks, but then 2 weeks later, it was 10,000 marks, and then it was a million, and then it was several million. This happened in a 2-month period of time.

People say: Oh, when it comes, when the currency unravels, it will be gradual.

In Germany, it happened in a 2-month period.

In Venezuela, the currency is completely worthless. It is the same in Germany. It is almost better to burn your currency for fuel or warmth than it is to spend it. This is what happens when you have runaway spending and out-of-control deficits. Venezuela is one of the richest countries in South America. They have more oil underground than Saudi Arabia, but, frankly, socialism doesn't work. Socialism is this borrow and spend. It has this alarming tendency to want to offer everybody everything and say it is going to be free. Many of these things backfire.

For the last year, we have been saying: Oh, gosh. We feel sorry for workers, so we are going to pay them while they are unemployed.

But guess what. If you pay them more than the market wage, more of them will choose unemployment, and more of them will choose unemployment, and more of them will stay unemployed for a longer period of time. We found this out in the 2008 recession.

During the 2008 recession, we extended unemployment. It is normally 26 weeks, paid for by a tax, and it largely works within the confines of a State-run program. We extended it to 99 weeks—almost 2 years.

But do you know what the studies found?

This is part of the syndrome we have around here. It is sort of the "big heart, small brain" syndrome. I think many of these people want to help people; they just don't understand that what they are doing is actually hurting the same people they are trying to help.

So if you extend unemployment to 99 weeks, and then, all of a sudden, the guy, at 99 weeks—or woman—says, "I need to get a job," and they go to the employer and say, "I have been out of work for 99 weeks, and I have been on unemployment," and the other person who is applying for the job says, "Well, I have been out of work for 10 weeks, and I am looking for a job," who do you think the employer hires?

Every time, it is the person out of work for 10 weeks.

As for the person who hasn't worked for 99 weeks, they are like: There might be something wrong here. We might have gotten to the point where we have lost the work ethic.

So what have you done to the people who you try to help?

You have actually kept them out of the workplace so long that they become unemployable.

After they become unemployable, what do they become?

They become the permanently unemployable, the nonworking part.

Do you wonder who this is?

Sixty-two percent of the country is in the workforce, and 38 percent is not. These are people who are permanently out of the workforce. These aren't people who can't work. These are just people who, for one reason or another, are no longer in the workforce.

Now, some of them really can't work, and we have sympathy for that, but many of them are people who just stayed out of work too long or took the wrong incentives or became addicted to drugs or alcohol because they weren't working.

So there are things we can do in our country, but if we are not careful, it is going to slip away from us. I don't want our country to be Venezuela, and I don't want our country to destroy its currency, but what we are offering is a more difficult sell because the other side is going to give you free college and free daycare and free cars and free cell phones.

What we are offering is opportunity. What we are offering is the freedom to try to strive. We are offering equality before the law, not equality of outcome after you have done your work, after you have tried to participate—equality before the law.

One of the interesting things that I think isn't often grasped by people is that if you want equal outcomes, if you want everybody to be the same and you want to equalize everybody, you actually have to treat them unequally.

In our country, it took a while, but we have gotten to the point where people truly believe in the concept of equality before the law. But if you also want to believe in equal outcomes at the end, realize you can't believe in both. They are mutually exclusive. You cannot believe in equality before the law if you want equal outcomes.

If you want this so-called equity at the end, you want everybody to be equal at the end, you have to treat them unequally because some people are either born with more talent, born with more money, born with more sense, luckier, work harder—there are a lot of reasons.

If you put 100 people in a room and you give them all 5 bucks, within an hour, somebody will have more. Somebody had some cigarettes. Somebody really wanted to smoke, and they have a dollar. The money spreads around the room. They have done these experiments. Money doesn't stay in one

place, but it is by and large, in a free society, based on work. But once the government becomes in charge of things, it becomes less of a meritocracy and becomes more of a society based on who you know.

There are rich people—don't get me wrong. When you look at socialism, there are rich people: Maduro, Chavez, Castro—incredibly rich people. They own their own islands. They have billions of dollars. Their relatives are all rich.

So instead of a society mostly based on merit—we talk about the greatness of America. One of the most important things about capitalism and freedom and what happened in America is, for the first time, it wasn't based on who you were; it wasn't based on royal lineage. For the most part, Europe was, you know, longtime landowners and royalty, and a very small percentage of the public did very well.

In fact, before 1820, before the Industrial Revolution, virtually everybody in the world—96, 98 percent of the world lived in extreme poverty. A bare subsistence level. Barely enough to eat. There was no obesity because there was barely enough food. You just scraped by. That was 98 percent of the world.

Fast-forward to today, after we have adopted what Adam Smith talked about as far as trade, division of labor, and capitalism, do you know what we have now? When you look at poverty—less than \$2 a day in the world—it is less than 10 percent of the world. You won't find this on television. There is not going to be any good news on television or in the newspaper. The poorest people in our country actually are equivalent to the middle class in most countries. We are a huge success, but we are a country misguided and led astray by media that aren't honest.

For example, if you watched CNN, you would think that nobody is getting vaccinated, and it is a complete disaster, and, whoa, we are stuck in this rut because no one is vaccinated. It is completely untrue. Over 90 percent of people over 65, who are the most vulnerable, are vaccinated. Now, sure, there are a lot of younger people who aren't vaccinated, and there are some older people, but 90 percent is a pretty good success. Over age 50, it is like 75, 80 percent of people. People are informed. They know this is a disease that can affect any age but affects primarily the older ages.

For example, the one truth you won't be told is that an 85-year-old has a 10,000 times greater chance of dying than a 10-year-old. Now, you think we should treat them the same? If you were their doctor, do you think a 10-year-old should get the same healthcare and the same prescriptions for what they need to do as an 85-year-old? That makes no sense at all.

I see 10-year-olds and I see 5-year-olds out on the Mall—my wife and I were walking down to the Lincoln Memorial the other day, and I saw 5-year-olds in groups, led by teachers, wearing

masks outside. There is no science to that.

We have Dr. Fauci spreading mistruths across the country, saying we have to forcibly vaccinate the kids? There is no science behind any of that. In fact, England is rejecting what we are doing. In England, because of the age skew, because of what they are seeing—that the people most at risk are of an older age—they are actually saying: Instead of forcibly vaccinating children, why don't we try to make the vaccine doses available for the elderly? Why don't we target our care to those who are at highest risk?

We have a problem in our country. We have people who have so politicized science that there are people struggling and dying every day because they have never heard about monoclonal antibodies. We have people dying every day because the government, at the behest of Dr. Fauci and a few other people, has said: You can't get monoclonal antibodies if you are in the hospital.

I talk to people every day who really have not yet heard of monoclonal antibodies, who get COVID again after being fully vaccinated or sometimes not being vaccinated and are not getting the treatment because Dr. Fauci says: If you are in the hospital, you don't get it.

So we have medicine that is coming from on high, from a central authority like the politburo, and doctors are afraid to prescribe. This has never happened in our country before. Doctors were able to make their own decisions based on their own experience, based on studies, based on real-life examples, but using their own discretion. Now doctors are afraid to prescribe monoclonal antibodies, and many of them are disallowed from prescribing it to an inpatient.

Realize the ridiculous nature of that. You are in the emergency room. You are sick, and you are coughing. You might be dying from COVID. You get to the emergency room. You don't know what to say. You can barely talk. Your spouse has to be able to tell the doctor "Please stop" in an emergency room. Give them the monoclonal antibodies before they are admitted because once they are admitted, we won't treat them. It is the same way with symptoms. You have to have symptoms within the first 10 days. If you don't have symptoms—if you are on day 11, you won't get monoclonal antibodies. It is completely arbitrary, it is capricious, and it has to do with government-mandated guidelines.

Let's take some of the other truths or mistruths that are out there.

I have said over and over again that cloth masks don't work because they don't. Peer-reviewed studies have shown time and time again that cloth masks don't work. But when Dr. Fauci tells you that all masks work, when he comes in all draped with three masks on himself with little insignias, clever insignias of different sports teams, he is actually spreading a mistruth that causes lives to be lost.

Why? Let's say you have a 75-year-old woman and she gets COVID, and her husband is taking care of her. Do you think the advice to go into the room to feed her, bathe her, help her get in and out of her clothes while she is sick, while wearing a cloth mask is a good idea or a bad idea? It is malpractice. Yet, for some reason, the left-wing media has lauded this man as the second coming, and what he is telling you is absolutely verifiably dangerous to your health.

The only mask that really works of any real value is the N95 mask. The surgical masks have some value but not very much. Most of the air is going around the mask. They just aren't of value. But you have to submit. The man is telling you to do it; you got to do what you got to do. But the thing is, when you tell people something is safe, they tend to react to that and have behavior, and in their behavior, they are in favor of something that may well actually be risky behavior for them.

The vaccinations—because we ignore natural immunity, we directed the vaccine to the wrong people and still are. For example, because of Dr. Fauci's lead—India is accepting his lead as well, and India does not have enough vaccine. They have a billion people. They can't vaccinate enough people fast enough. So if you have a billion people and you have 200 million doses of vaccine, who do you think you should give it to? Should you give it to the 10-year-old the same as the 85-year-old? No. That is ridiculous. But what about two 65-year-olds and one of them has had COVID and one of them hasn't?

The studies are plentiful. The studies are throughout that say that if you have already had it, you have natural immunity to COVID, as good or better than the vaccine.

Do you think it makes good public health policy to say that everybody who is 65 should get it instead of saying: Have you had it? Why don't we check you for antibodies if you think you have had it? Maybe you should wait until we have vaccinated every 65-year-old who doesn't have immunity.

These are real things. These are real discussions. But if you have these, unless it is on the Senate floor—actually, that is not even true. You can say this on the Senate floor, and YouTube will take it down. I have had it happen. I have given speeches on the floor that YouTube takes down.

So this is a world in which people need to realize and get back to the ideas of classical liberalism where we debated things. Classical liberalism was about skepticism; it was about you having your opinion and me having my opinion. But the difference between the elitist or the collectivist point of view and the individual right point of view is, I believe you have every right to your opinion.

But if you are a collectivist and you believe that, from the very top down, all medical decisions come from Dr. Fauci, and if he doesn't want you to

fly, you don't get to fly—see, it is different from individual liberty because I think if you have a differing opinion, you are welcome to your opinion.

If an airline has a policy I don't like, maybe I choose not to fly, but the idea that we are going to restrict everyone's behavior based on what they decide to do—what is next? People eat too many cheeseburgers. We are not going to give them a heart stent because we think they haven't behaved and haven't listened to the doctors on what they should be eating?

There is no end to this. But in the end, if we are not careful, we are going to spend this country into oblivion. COVID is a big cause of the extra spending we have now, but I can tell you, there are ramifications that are coming quick. They are coming in the form of higher prices. But there is no reason in the world for us to default. We have plenty of money. We should simply pay for the interest based on what comes in every month.

With that, I would like to reserve my time and turn it over.

Mr. LEE. Will the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. PAUL. Sure.

Mr. LEE. Senator PAUL, when you and I were both elected to the Senate back in 2010, I remember the national debt was an issue then. It was becoming large enough that people were concerned about it. As it mounted, sometimes we had conversations about how long it might continue—how long it might continue to spiral upward.

Are you surprised to see that here we are, 11 year later, 11 years after you and I arrived here, and where it has gone since then?

Mr. PAUL. I guess “surprised” is not the word I would choose; I would say disappointed.

You know, the tea party movement—we had 100,000 people on the Mall out there. People were concerned about the debt. They were concerned about constitutional government.

I remember you and I meeting for the first time and talking about how we needed to reverse some of these terrible precedents that had allowed government to grow large and that the courts need to reform government, as well as government be reformed from its elected officials.

But, yes, we had a great debate that summer. In the summer of 2011, we said we wouldn't raise the debt ceiling without reform.

Mr. LEE. If the gentleman would yield for a question again, I believe it was during that summer that a number of people started focusing on emerging economic research, including research proposed by Professors Rogoff and Reinhart at Stanford University suggesting that whenever the debt-to-GDP ratio exceeds a certain level, exceeds roughly 100 percent, 1-to-1, certain things start to happen, and economic growth becomes more elusive.

As I recall, we were nowhere close, yet, to the 1-to-1 ratio. Now that we

have blown past that, what do you think that ought to tell us about the fact that, even as we have blown past that point, we are now being asked to raise the debt ceiling by larger and larger amounts or as sometimes—

Mr. PAUL. Without any reform.

Mr. LEE. For a time period without any reform.

Mr. PAUL. Yes. I remember when, a couple of years after that, we actually became that—our economy was equal to our debt. So the gross domestic product—how much everything is worth that is produced in the whole country—was about 17 or 18 billion at the time, as the debt sort of crossed that.

We are now, depending on how you measure it, some say at like 140 percent of our GDP, and the interesting thing is, that is about where Greece was when Greece began to declare its bankruptcy and was unable to pay its bills.

It is alarming. It is foolish and unwise for us to say: Oh, there are no consequences. I think there will be consequences, and the No. 1 thing that we are seeing now is inflation.

Mr. LEE. Now, we have seen, with—our status as the United States having the world's reserve currency, the U.S. dollar, has given us some flexibility in that area, flexibility that other countries like Greece haven't had.

Do you think there is some risk of becoming overly confident in that world reserve currency status? In other words, could we be jeopardizing the very thing that we fought so hard to achieve and that so few nations ever achieve?

Mr. PAUL. Yes. And I think that you are right. Having the world's currency allows us—you know, many countries trade in dollars. You will go into marketplaces all around the world, and what they are actually exchanging is dollars. So as we have bought more goods than we have exported, we import more than we export, we paid for that in dollars. Some have described that as being able to export our inflation.

People have also said: Well, the dollar isn't perfect. It is a fiat currency. It is being inflated.

But everybody else is so bad that we are sort of the cleanest shirt in a closet full of dirty shirts.

So, yes, I think being the reserve currency has allowed us to last longer, but there are immutable rules of economics that eventually catch up to a country, and I think we approach those. I don't think anybody can predict exactly when we get there, but I think we are approaching a time—and it may not be a gradual unraveling. You know, if you look back at the history of our marketplace, we have had these black swan events. We have had these events where the marketplace, in 7 or 8 days in our history, most of the losses have happened calamitously.

Even in 2011, when the market went down, there was a debate. They said:

Oh, it is because we risked the debt ceiling.

Well, many of us thought that the marketplace went down at that time because we actually continued to borrow without reforming the process.

Mr. LEE. In an economy where currency and circulation isn't backed up by any tangible object and where the government has effectively the ability to just print more money, even if that currency happens to be the world's reserve currency, at some point after you keep printing money, doesn't that cause problems?

Mr. PAUL. It is based on faith, and so when does the faith end? Faith is not something particularly—it is hard to determine faith in the dollar. One way you can determine it is, will people buy our bonds. One of the indications that people lose faith in our currency is that when, to borrow money, you see your bond prices rise; you see interest prices rise. I think that is coming.

You know, we are already seeing inflation at a 5-percent rate. Typically, you will see the interest rates rise as well. And there is going to be a time there are going to be repercussions. I fully believe that you cannot continue to borrow at this rate without ultimately suffering, perhaps, an economic calamity. And I want to stop that for our country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah is recognized.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, we have a debt ceiling for a reason. It is not completely arbitrary. It is not just made up. It is not something that someone came up with for their own amusement. No. When the sheer numeric volume, the quantity, the amount of our national debt ceases to cause panic; when the principle of jeopardizing our children's future loses effect; when the sacrifice it would cost taxpayers to pay the debt becomes laughably large; when all else fails, Congress sets a cap and says: Here, here, here. We have to think about this. We have to think about this debt problem.

There is a reason why we have that. They are sound reasons rooted in logic, rooted in mathematics, rooted in the inevitability of our own future if we don't control the way that the Federal Government spends money. Now, nearly half of the Members of this entire body—almost the entirety of the Senate Republican conference—wrote a letter almost 2 months ago, saying that we would not raise the debt limit. We committed that we were finally going to make a change for the sake of families back home and generations still unborn. We were going to make a change to rein in reckless spending.

Now we are faced with more spending and more debt than our country has ever seen before. Our debt-to-GDP ratio has now reached a staggering level of 125 percent.

The national debt is rushing toward \$30 trillion, and far too quickly, this body is signaling a willingness and, I might dare say, an eagerness to sign on

the dotted line without thinking through the consequences or at least without thinking through the consequences of everyone outside this building, without thinking through the consequences of those who are wealthy and well connected and will probably fare just fine regardless of the Federal Government's reckless practice of effectively just printing more money.

Let me tell you why that is such a problem and why I think it is so dangerous. First of all, as I mentioned a moment ago in my exchange with the Senator from Kentucky, once we pass this 1-to-1 debt-to-GDP ratio, economists have scoured the landscape and looked at economies all over the world throughout human history, throughout periods of time in which any records have been kept at all, and they have concluded that this 100 percent debt-to-GDP ratio is tragic; it is dangerous; it is perilous. Once you cross that Rubicon, you are in some very, very tough positions. Economic growth starts to sputter. It staggers. It becomes more and more difficult to get out of the death spiral.

You see, in the past, even as our national debt has been on the rise, we have been OK insofar as it has increased, more or less, to a degree commensurate with the size of our economy. Economic growth has been such that it remained, more or less, constant—less constant lately, but it has remained somewhat proportional to the size of our economy. Economic growth has propelled that, but that is the problem. It is the goose that laid the golden egg. And we know what happens when you get rid of that goose or when you meaningfully impair its ability to lay those golden eggs.

Once we reach that point, we pass the 100 percent debt-to-GDP ratio, we know that our economic growth will stall, and it will become far more difficult to pay off. We also know that it matters on a very personal level, for reasons I will get into more in just a moment, for poor and middle-class American families everywhere, throughout Utah and across America. People who are living paycheck to paycheck or otherwise on a fixed income or fixed budget, like most American families, find that when the government just prints more money—as it tends to do when we start to borrow and then spend trillions of dollars at a time more than the Federal Government is bringing in—that brings about inflation. It is as though there are a basket of goods that the economy is capable of faithfully, consistently producing from one year to another. The basket of goods might grow or shrink a little bit from year to year, but it is going to tend to fluctuate mostly at the margins. The big picture is going to look fairly consistent.

So what happens when the government just prints more money and puts that into circulation? The purchasing power of each dollar is diminished. Now, this tends to work out fine. In

fact, it can work out really well for wealthy and well-connected individuals. The rich usually figure out a way to get even richer off of this dynamic. They can hedge against it. They can figure out a way to benefit in one way or another from the chaos and sometimes even from the government spending. But where does that leave everyone else? Well, for most people—and by “most people” I mean 99 percent of Americans—it is not going to make them wealthier. It is going to make them poorer because most people are still living with more or less the same income, more or less the same resources. They have still got more or less the same basket of goods in the economy, but when you have got more dollars in the American economy because we are effectively printing more, each dollar matters less. It buys less—everything from gas to groceries, from housing to healthcare. Poor and middle-class American families suffer while the wealthy and well connected might benefit. And a small handful of politicians receive a pat on the back, thanking them, congratulating them as they congratulate themselves and each other for what they characterize as a job well done.

Sure, they will always be able to point to someone who benefits from the programs they are sponsoring that they are creating. Some of those people won't be wealthy and well-connected interests. Some of them will be deserving families, some of them, poor and middle-class American families. But, you know, most families are just made poorer as government expands its footprint.

Let's look at what happened last year alone. During the last few years before the pandemic, we were bringing in about \$3 trillion a year in tax revenue. We were spending about \$4 trillion—a massive, embarrassing, disgraceful, indefensible deficit, an annual deficit of about a trillion dollars a year. It was inexcusable, especially at the height—at the peak—of an economic cycle.

Then the pandemic hit. Last year, we still brought in about \$3 trillion in tax revenue, just as we had expected, just as we had during the previous 2 years. Only this time we didn't spend \$4 trillion. We spent \$6.6 trillion. We brought in \$3 trillion, and we spent \$6.6 trillion. We spent more than double what we brought in. We spent more money that was borrowed than the money that was paid into the Treasury.

What did that do? Well, it dramatically increased the money supply—abruptly, in a way that hurts poor and middle-class American families. It is a predictable, foreseeable result.

Look, if you are playing Monopoly and all of a sudden you decide to just double the amount of money that everyone gets in the game, it doesn't make everybody better off; it just increases the prices that are paid.

What happens when that is real money and those are real people, when

it is not just plastic game pieces at stake, but it is hungry mouths that need to be fed and sheltered and cared for? That is where it hurts. And that is what is so tragic when the Government colludes with itself, with a small handful of people on the outside encouraging it to do so, some whispering in the ears of the politicians, telling them that they will be doing so many great things; that the expenditures and the expansion of government is worth the investment.

They are not doing it with their own money. No, they are doing it with the money of America's poor and middle class. It is really a sort of reverse Robin Hood sort of thing. We are stealing from the poor to give to the rich and the well connected and to give good headlines to a small handful of politicians. Shame on us. Shame on us all. Shame on this institution as we have done that.

Look, I came to the U.S. Senate 11 years ago, committed to reducing the size, the scope, the reach, the cost, and the overall footprint of the Federal Government and its impact on the lives of everyday citizens. I did so based on the understanding and based on the indisputable fact that whenever government expands its reach, it does so at the expense of individual liberty and individual prosperity.

It doesn't mean that government doesn't have a place. It doesn't mean that we don't need government; quite the contrary, we do. But it just means that there is always a balancing that has to be taken into account. You can't expand government without hurting average, everyday people who are subject to those things.

Unfortunately, 11 years later, that same government is larger, more expensive, and more burdensome than ever before. In a farcically futile system, Americans now work for months out of every year just to pay their Federal taxes. Then, after all that is done, they are insultingly demeaned and told that it is not enough; in fact, it hasn't been enough for a long time.

Even though some of you who are now taxpayers and now voters have now worked months—at least weeks, maybe months—out of every year just to pay your Federal taxes, and even though a lot of this debt may have been accumulated before some of you were old enough to vote or some of you were even born, no matter. You have got to pay it. This is making that worse. We are making it worse for present living Americans, those who are of voting age, working age, tax-paying age, and those who are not. And it is also adding burdens to those who have not even been born, whose parents have yet to meet. The regulatory state is growing ever more costly in terms of its economic impact.

I have been studying the cost of the Federal regulatory system for about 25 years. I first started thinking about it while I was in law school. I remember a guest speaker came to speak at our

law school, and he explained that the Federal regulatory system adds what he characterized as sort of a backdoor, invisible, de facto tax on poor and middle-class Americans. He explained that it is a backdoor invisible tax, it is regressive, and that it affects everyone and disproportionately the poor and middle class because of the fact that nowhere is any consumer able to identify the precise cost to them. In fact, most of them don't even know that it exists because unlike their tax bill, there is no return at the end of the year. Unlike their sales tax that typically will show up on someone's receipt or a property tax or anything else, there is no written indication of it that tells any one taxpayer or citizen what it is costing them every year. But it is there.

Anyway, back in I think 1996 or 1997, he explained that the Federal regulatory system was imposing this backdoor, invisible, highly regressive tax on Americans to the tune of \$3 or \$400 billion a year. I remember thinking, this is staggering, because that is a lot of money. It is a lot of money that could otherwise go toward other priorities, whether in the government, you know, shoring up Social Security or Medicare; or some other program providing for soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines with what they need; or in the lives of families, providing for housing, education, for nourishment or other needs of our children. It just goes into the cost of complying with Federal regulations.

So, yes, Americans do pay for that, we explained; they just pay for it in a way that they can't quite see. There is no single bill that tallies the size of the expense for it, but they do pay for it nonetheless. They pay for it with higher prices on goods and services, everything they buy, and they also pay for it with diminished wages, unemployment, and underemployment.

So here we are 25 years later. No one knows for sure what the Federal regulatory system costs, but most estimates I have seen of late put the number at about \$2 trillion a year—\$2 trillion. That is the backdoor, invisible tax that Americans pay through higher prices on goods and services, diminished wages, unemployment, and underemployment, due to what it costs to comply with Federal regulations.

Most people don't even think much about Federal regulations, and with good reason. People have other, better things to do. Those who do think about them are perhaps inclined to think—maybe because they have been taught to think or because they have never been taught otherwise—that these costs are borne by billionaires; that they are borne by big, blue chip corporations or a type of industrial tycoon whom you would associate with a Monopoly game piece perhaps. But they are, in fact, borne by poor and middle-class Americans everywhere. That is money they can't get back, on top of the money they had to pay after work-

ing weeks or months out of every year just to pay their Federal taxes, and then being told: By the way, after the \$2 trillion that you as a people were required to pay through this backdoor, invisible, highly regressive regulatory tax, so to speak, and on top of the \$3 trillion that you paid on your taxes, it is still not enough because we are now nearly \$29 trillion in debt. It is sad. It is insulting. It is discouraging.

I mentioned inflation a minute ago, and I want to get back to that for a moment. It is the natural, foreseeable consequence of a government that really knows no limits on what it is there to do and knows essentially no limits on what it can spend. These days, if the Federal Government can dream it, if politicians can desire it, they can fund it.

There has never been an institution on planet Earth that had access to more capital than the Federal Government does. There has never been a government in the existence of planet Earth that has had the ability to produce the amount of wealth that this Nation has and the ability of its people to produce that wealth and the ability of the government to spend that amount of money. Because of that, this government also has tremendous bargaining power, and it has correspondingly tremendous borrowing power that goes along with that.

In other words, because the American economy has been strong and because the U.S. dollar has been the world's reserve currency of choice, that has given us this ability. It might make it seem like money, while not growing on trees technically, can be sort of printed into existence, just taken out of thin air, and that we won't feel the consequence for it.

Now, you can get away with that a little bit longer when you have the world's reserve currency and in an economy as large as ours, with credit that has been relatively good compared to that of other sovereign nations, but it does have limits, and we are seeing those limits now. We are seeing them in ways that we haven't seen yet. I was worried about this, scared to death of it 10, 11 years ago when I first got here, but it is so much worse now. It is so much worse now because we have behaved in a way that has made it worse. You can't hide it for that long. The piper eventually has to be paid, and the consequences can eventually make themselves known. It is finally starting to harm American families by reducing their real earnings and undercutting their purchasing power.

In new research that we just released this week, the Joint Economic Committee, Republicans—and I am the ranking Republican on that committee—found that these rising prices are brought about as a result of a mix of two types of inflation: transitory inflation and more lasting inflation brought about by runaway government spending. We found that government stimulus measures have ignited more

lasting and more systemic inflation. These inflationary pressures are building on transitory inflation, and they are pushing prices higher.

That is why I am really concerned that, over a year after the recession officially ended, Congress continues undaunted, unhindered, and seemingly more eager than ever in its desire to pursue new massive government spending measures, including a \$3.5 trillion budget resolution—the single largest spending package in history.

If Congress continues to pursue spending packages that boost consumer demand while at the same time depressing employment and investment, which is exactly what we are doing, then government-induced inflation will increase even further, with even more drastic, painful consequences for us all but especially for America's poor and middle class. The wealthy and well connected will do just fine. The wealthiest among us will probably get richer as a result. The politicians among us who vote for these things will probably be patted on the back, congratulated by a compliant, dutiful news media, and, most importantly, congratulated by each other, while poor and middle-class Americans will be left silently carrying the bill and bearing the pain of what they are doing to them.

Congress should consider the inflationary risks of this pattern of unfettered, unrestrained government spending. My colleagues should be aware that the costs go beyond the simple sticker price of new spending.

The American people will be better served by policies that are geared toward returning Americans to work and removing barriers to business investment in American workers. But we are not doing that. We are going in the opposite direction of where we should, and as a result, Americans are paying the price, especially poor and middle-class Americans.

It is certainly affecting people in my home State of Utah. Eighty-five percent of Utahans who were polled recently said that they were concerned about inflation, and they have reason to be. We have data from all over the country. Look, nationwide, overall, prices are up 5.3 percent over last year, just in 1 year alone—5.3 percent overall nationwide. In some areas of the economy, it is particularly acute. You see it in meat prices, which are up 8 percent overall from last year. Beef is an astounding 12 percent more expensive than last year. Milk is 10 percent more expensive. Gasoline costs 50 percent more than it did a year ago. In the Salt Lake City area, home prices are up 26 percent above where they were last year. So everything from gas to groceries and from housing to healthcare—they are all going up in like fashion.

Global supply chains, quite frankly, can't keep up. Warnings are already being raised about holiday shortages and huge price increases as there just

aren't enough goods in the entire economy to meet demand, because, again, you just add more money to it. It doesn't make it more affordable; it makes it less affordable. More spending and therefore more money chasing fewer goods will only cause prices to rise even more. That hurts the poorest Americans the most.

The Federal Government prioritizes those who are already wealthy and well connected with its spending, and its politicians right here in this Chamber congratulate themselves and each other and are congratulated by a compliant mainstream news media that for whatever reason always wants to praise the expansion of the Federal Government even when it hurts America's poor and middle class, which it does.

Americans are paying the price. Poor and middle-class Americans are paying the price—those least able to do anything about it. Yes, we are causing that. Those we prioritize, helping the wealthy and well connected with this kind of spending—those Americans who don't have paid lobbyists are left in the dust, holding the bags and harmed the most.

We aren't cold or calloused for rejecting more spending—no, no. We are considering those who end up paying the price for this Monopoly money ploy to spend without end. The everyday Americans, the hard-working Americans shouldn't be harmed like this. Yet they are going to be. They are already feeling that. It is indefensible.

So we are nearing the point of nearly \$29 trillion in our national debt. It is the highest debt in our Nation's history. The debt-to-GDP ratio is now over 125 percent. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, debt-to-GDP ratio, where economic growth around the world throughout human history—growth tends to stall out once we cross that 100 percent debt-to-GDP ratio. Just a couple of years ago, we were still in the 80-percent range, and now we are at about 125 percent.

Politicians have promised to deal with the national debt for decades. They promised it over and over and over again, and now the argument has shifted. Some on the other side of the aisle are saying that debt doesn't matter or that it might even be good. In fact, they are saying that it is so necessary that if we don't add to it, if we don't augment it, if we don't feed this beast, then we are somehow going to cause an economic catastrophe.

Now, look, it may be good for their socialist makeover of America. It is disastrous for the people back home, especially those who they claim will be benefitting from it. The debt has reached absolutely unimaginable levels. It is almost \$230,000 per taxpayer, nearing \$87,000 per citizen.

Meanwhile, businesses across the country are struggling to keep their doors open among labor shortages, skyrocketing prices, heavy regulation, vaccine and other mandates, and people losing their jobs.

Because the President of the United States is using authority he doesn't have through an order he is unwilling to even share with us, they are going to choose, in some cases, between getting a vaccine that in some cases might be hazardous to their health based on unique circumstances and the judgment of their own doctor—yet they have to choose between getting the vaccine and losing their job.

Many businesses are barely inching along. So, no, they don't need more government spending. In fact, talking to countless business owners in Utah, more spending is the last thing they need. But it is certainly the last thing that poor and middle-class Americans need. What happens when we do that is they all get poorer, even as we are congratulated and we congratulate each other for expanding government yet again.

I have had recent conversations with a number of businessowners who, because of the heavy hand, the heavy spending practices of government, have been unable to keep themselves even in business.

I spoke to one of many restaurant owners recently who explained his inability, even after increasing repeatedly the offering price, offering huge, huge sign-in bonuses—\$15, then \$16, then \$18, then \$19, then \$20 an hour on top of that hiring bonus just to hire people to work in his restaurant in a college town with a lot of young people who are usually willing to work in restaurants. They couldn't do it because of government interference. The government was competing with them. The government was paying people more to not work than they could be paid to work. This is only compounding the problem.

None of this would be possible if we weren't effectively operating this government with a printing press that makes the American people poorer.

So, yes, I signed that letter 2 months ago, along with 46 Republican Senators, almost the entire Senate Republican Conference. I signed that not just because the letter looked neat, not because it would get praise—I know we would get the opposite of that in the press—but because of the people we represent, especially the poor and middle class we represent, who will be made poorer and less secure every single time we do this.

I can't vote to raise this debt ceiling, not right now, especially given the plans at play to increase spending immediately by another \$3.5 trillion, which according to some is only as low as \$3.5 trillion because of creative accounting. But the real number might be more than \$5 trillion. Regardless, we can't do that. We can't afford that.

It is not that the government can't physically do it—we know its ability to do it—but we also know that when it exercises that ability to do that, poor and middle-class Americans suffer.

I can't do this to them, neither should any of us.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Kaine). The Senator from Wyoming.

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I rise to address the elephant in the room that almost no one is talking about. Everyone is talking about the debt limit, but almost no one is talking about the debt.

I am a rancher, and I often think about policy in ranching terms. This is "all hat, no cattle" politics.

We are starting down a track of a \$29 trillion national debt. Let me say that again: a \$29 trillion debt.

When I first came to Congress, it was just under \$10 trillion, which seemed at the time an insurmountable debt. Now, we are getting closer to \$30 trillion. Certainly, if the spending that is being entertained by the majority party and the Biden administration passes, we will be well over \$30 trillion.

In the immortal, but edited, words of Jimmy MacMillan—"the rent is too [dang] high," guy—the debt is too dang high.

Another sobering statistic that was raised by the last speaker, in February, the Congressional Budget Office said that the national debt would surpass the economy's size this year, meaning the debt-to-GDP ratio has long been an indicator of the country's fiscal health and countries have historically tended to decline once their debt surpassed their gross domestic product. This year, that country is us. It is the United States of America. Remember, countries historically decline once their debt passes their gross domestic product. That is what is happening here.

It is a very sobering thought, but not a thought that is part of the debate for raising the debt ceiling. The debt ceiling increase that is being discussed now is so more spending can occur without addressing our debt-to-GDP ratio. We cannot go on like this. It is irresponsible at the deepest levels.

Now, I understand and I appreciate the concerns that have led to this short-term debt limit deal, but the fact of the matter is, unless we actually address the spending problems that are driving our national debt—and soon—we are already saddling future generations of people in my State of Wyoming and all the American people with a debt that they will never be able to repay. And soon, interest payments on that debt will crowd out other spending. The only reason it hasn't happened already is because interest rates have been relatively low.

But we have to pay interest on our debt before we pay other things, including the things that are in the majority party and the Biden administration's \$3.5 trillion plan. I believe this is unforgivable.

Now, I am new to the Senate, so I was not here the last time we had to address the debt ceiling issue. But the last time it came up, it was Republicans who were the majority party and were on the dance floor by themselves.

Since Republicans were in power in Senate, Democrats left the Republicans to dance by themselves and raise the debt limit alone. So anyone talking about this issue today needs to recognize that history.

It is normal for the party in power—where now the Democrats control the House, the Senate, and the White House, it is normal for them to raise the debt ceiling.

The problem is that both when Republicans have been in the majority and have raised the debt ceiling and now Democrats are in the majority and are going to raise the debt ceiling, neither party seems to talk about the debt. They only talk about raising the debt ceiling.

It is really kind of shocking that the main focus of this debate, whenever it occurs, is never on how we got here. It is never on why we spend too much. It is never on the debt itself. It is always on just raising the ceiling or suspending the ceiling so we can spend more, so we can run up more debt, so we can have higher interest payments that can crowd out other spending, that can create the vicious cycle that creates deficit after deficit after deficit.

Our colleagues on the left can throw back at any Republican here that spending has gone on like drunken sailors, even among Republicans, and they are not wrong—and, also, I mean no disrespect to the Navy in referencing sailors. Happy birthday to the Navy, celebrating its 246th birthday yesterday.

There is a lot of blame to go around here. What I would like to see us do is get together, both parties, all colleagues who are interested in this subject, come up with a way to address our debt, to balance our budget, whether it is freezing spending or addressing our trust funds or recognizing how we can fix our entitlement programs or how we can make the Social Security fund solvent, which we know how to do and do not have the political courage to do. We have to contain these massive interest payments. We must start addressing this issue.

Earlier this year, I proposed the Sustainable Budget Act to create bipartisan solutions to our long-term spending. The Sustainable Budget Act should be on the table.

My colleagues Senators ROMNEY and MANCHIN also introduced the Trust Act to shore up the long-term fiscal solvency of our trust funds. That is another bill that should be on the table at the same time that we are debating raising the debt ceiling.

Both of these ideas are worthy proposals that we should be discussing now on a bipartisan basis because this problem isn't one that only affects one party. When the time comes to pay the bill, our debt holders don't care—won't care—if you are a Republican or a Democrat. They only care about getting paid, and we are swiftly approaching a time when we will be unable to do so.

You know, one of the reasons that I became so interested in digital currencies, in nonfiat currencies, is because they are not issued by a government. Bitcoin is not issued by a government, so it is not beholden to the debts that are run up by governments, including the greatest government that has ever existed on the face of the Earth, the United States of America.

The United States of America is now at the point where our debt exceeds our GDP ratio. It is the point at which nations decline. If we are going to let the dollar decline, having the lessons of history in front of us, and failing to act, we are truly irresponsible.

In the event that that contingency occurs, I want to make sure that nonfiat currencies—currencies not issued by government, currencies not beholden to political elections—can grow, can allow people to save, can be there in the event that we fail at what we know we have to do.

There is no proof yet in the 21st century that we are going to make this right. Time and again, in the U.S. House and the Senate, time and again, Presidents of both parties have run up the debt irresponsibly, with no plan to address it. So thank God for bitcoin and other nonfiat currencies that transcend the irresponsibility of governments, including our own. That is an indictment of our responsibility—Democrats and Republicans, Presidents and Congress—our responsibility to address this looming, predictable, massive issue.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise to speak for the generations of Americans who this body is irresponsibly drowning in debt.

Now, to be clear, debt is a bipartisan problem. Debt is a problem both parties bear substantial responsibility for.

To understand just how true that is, we need look back just 21 years. In the year 2000, when this century began, our national debt stood at roughly \$5 trillion.

Mr. President, I want you to pause and think about that. The year 2000 wasn't that long ago. Five trillion dollars is the total amount we owed.

In 2001, George W. Bush became President. During the 8 years of Bush's Presidency, the debt doubled from \$5 trillion to \$10 trillion. My party bears a significant degree of responsibility for that growth.

Then in 2008, Barack Obama was elected President; and over the next 8 years, the debt doubled again, from \$10 trillion to \$20 trillion.

I want you to pause and reflect on that. The \$5 trillion debt that we started the 21st century with had been accumulated by 42 Presidents over two centuries; and then two Presidents, over 16 years, one a Republican and one a Democrat, took our debt and increased it by 300 percent, quadrupled the Nation's debt in 16 years.

As we stand here today in 2021, some 9 months into the Joe Biden Presidency, the debt is roughly \$29 trillion.

My home State, the great State of Texas, has roughly 29 million residents. That means the national debt is \$1 million for every man, woman, and child in the State of Texas. That is reckless and irresponsible.

Now, my Democratic colleagues point out that Republicans spent too much during the Trump Presidency. I agree. Much of that spending I voted against. And I would note last year was an extraordinary year with a pandemic unlike anything any of us have ever seen in our lives. I wish Republicans had been better at exercising fiscal responsibility when we had control of the White House and both houses of Congress.

The unfortunate reality in this body, though, is that when you have a multi-trillion-dollar spending bill, you can usually count on the votes of every single Democrat and about half the Republicans. So on spending bill after spending bill, we see 75 to 80 Senators coming together—usually all the Democrats and half the Republicans.

And there are about 20 of us who try to say: Why are we bankrupting our kids and grandkids? Why are we digging the hole deeper and deeper and deeper?

But that is—at least right now—a minority view in this body.

But the fact that my party bears significant responsibility for the debt we have today is not to draw an equivalency between what has happened in the past and what is happening right now, because, Mr. President, what Senate Democrats, what House Democrats, and what President Biden are doing now has no precedence in our Nation's history. It is an order of magnitude different. Senate Democrats, House Democrats, and President Biden, if the spending proposals they have put forth pass, within a 12-month period, they will have spent \$9.5 trillion.

One of the problems people have at home is understanding big numbers. A million, a billion, a trillion—they have all got an "illion" in them. It is hard to tell the difference. That just sounds like a lot of money.

Well, let's put \$9.5 trillion in context: \$9.5 trillion is more than twice what the United States spent to win World War II. The entire course of the war, it cost us less than half of that to save the free world and defeat the Nazis. And Washington Democrats are trying to spend that in 12 months. It is wildly irresponsible. It is reckless.

They are trying to accompany that with trillions of dollars of new taxes. If the Democrats get their way, every tax you can think of is going up. Individual income tax is going up. Corporate taxes are going up. Small business taxes are going up. Capital gains taxes are going up. The death tax is going up. Farmers are paying more in taxes. Ranchers are paying more in taxes. Small businesses are paying more in taxes. Working families are paying more in taxes.

Joe Biden campaigned promising no one who makes \$400,000 a year or less will see their taxes go up. That statement was a flat-out falsehood.

And, by the way, look, I recognize Joe Biden and I are of a different party, so maybe you are inclined not to credit me with my assessment of the truth or falsity of President Biden's promise.

Well, if you don't take my word for it, take the Joint Committee on Taxation's word for it, that analyzed the Democrats' tax program and found, for roughly 80 percent of Americans, taxes either stay the same or go up; that it is cutting taxes for a very small portion of Americans. It is raising taxes on people with incomes as low as \$40,000 a year.

By the way, it is also worth noting part of the Democratic talking points is that the deficit is driven by the 2017 tax cuts. Those are good partisan talking points. Those will get a round of applause in any Democratic gathering. Although I say that, with all candor, Mr. President, I haven't been to many Democratic gatherings, but I feel confident that is accurate; that Democrats like: "Yes, too many tax cuts."

Before you are inclined just to believe that political rhetoric, however, you might at least pause to look at the facts, to look at the numbers. And the facts and numbers show that, after we passed the 2017 tax cuts, cutting taxes on working families across this country, that we saw record prosperity; we saw the lowest unemployment in 50 years; we saw the lowest African American unemployment ever recorded; we saw the lowest Hispanic unemployment ever recorded; and we saw Federal tax revenues go up.

So the next time you hear a Democrat say the debt comes from the tax cut, it just ain't so. The next year, the Treasury got more money in taxes than it had the year before. So the Democratic narrative about tax cuts driving the debt is—to borrow a term from the current President—malarkey.

The debt that we are facing as a result of this wild spending spree is going up and up and up, and one of the consequences of that spending and that debt is we are seeing an inflation bomb going off in this country.

Now, for younger Americans, inflation may not sound very real. Inflation is not something we have lived with in recent times. We have been in this sort of weird holiday from economic history with inflation being very, very low.

Mr. President, you and I are both old enough to remember the 1970s. We are both old enough to remember double-digit inflation, 21-percent interest rates.

Inflation is a cruel tax, and it is a tax on everybody, but it is particularly cruel on the most vulnerable.

You know who gets hammered with inflation? Senior citizens, seniors who spent their whole lives saving. And they suddenly see the values of their savings going down and down and down because Washington politicians are de-

valuing their money—seniors who are on a fixed income get the same amount of money each month, but suddenly the cost of everything goes up.

Right now, today, all across this country—in Texas, in Virginia, and in every other State—prices are going up. The cost of gasoline has skyrocketed as a direct result of Joe Biden and the Democrats' policies. The cost of food is going up. The cost of rent is going up. The cost of lumber is going up. The cost of homes is going up.

According to the chief economist at Moody's Analytics, for households earning the U.S. median annual income, which is about \$70,000 a year, the current inflation rate has forced them to spend another \$175 a month in food and fuel and housing. That works out to \$2,100 a year.

So each month, if your family is at the median income level in the United States, the Democrat inflation tax is about 175 bucks a month. And that is before their massive tax rates kick in, and that is before this body passes the Bernie Sanders socialist budget.

It is worth noting just how radical these Democrats are. President Biden is in the White House; that is true. But in the Senate, Senate Democrats have the slimmest majority possible. This is a 50-50 body. It is only by virtue of the Vice President's tie-breaking vote that they have any majority at all. Yet Democrats have interpreted this incredibly close election as a mandate to radically transform this country.

Joe Biden didn't campaign on that. Joe Biden campaigned as a nice, happy, centrist moderate. No more mean tweets. Nothing to scare you at home. We are just going to return to the halcyon days of yesteryear.

Five years ago—well, let's go back even further than that. Nine years ago, Mr. President, when you and I were both elected to the Senate—we arrived here the exact same time. Nine years ago, there was exactly one socialist in this body that admitted he was a socialist. That was BERNIE SANDERS.

If you asked Senator SANDERS, he would say: I am a socialist. I am not a Democrat. I am running as a socialist.

And most of the Democrats in this body would say: No, no, no. That is not me. I am not a socialist like him.

That was a fringe view. Even in the 2020 election, Joe Biden, when he was running in a primary against BERNIE SANDERS, said: No, no, no. I am not a socialist.

Well, today, BERNIE SANDERS is the chairman of the Budget Committee. We are in the midst of debating, passing, the Bernie Sanders socialist budget—\$5.5 trillion. That is radical. That is extreme. And I think our Democratic colleagues are too scared of the left flank in their own party to dare stand up to it.

Now, in addition to the reckless spending, to the reckless taxes they are trying to ram through, to the massive debt they are trying to ram through, we also have a radical agenda across

the country, including on our southern border, where we are facing a crisis on our southern border. Over 2 million people are expected to cross illegally this year. The highest rate of illegal immigration in 21 years, and congressional Democrats refuse to do anything about it.

Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS have handed the agenda over to the open-border radicals, and we are seeing a public health crisis; we are seeing a national security crisis; we are seeing a humanitarian crisis as a result.

As bad as the economic and domestic policy has been, the foreign policy has been even worse, including the greatest national security disaster and foreign policy disaster in a generation—the utterly incompetent and calamitous surrender in Afghanistan.

All of that extreme agenda is being pushed by Joe Biden and CHUCK SCHUMER and NANCY PELOSI, which brings us to our present crisis, the debt ceiling crisis.

Our national debt is roughly \$29 trillion. Yet Democrats want to add trillions more to that. How many trillions? We don't know. They are battling within their conference just how many trillions more with which to saddle this country, but it is going to be a lot.

But do you know the curious thing? This crisis is 100 percent manufactured by Democrats. Why is that? Because for the entirety of this Congress, Democrats have had complete, 100-percent power to raise the debt ceiling anytime they have wanted.

How is that? Well, ordinarily, in this body, the way legislation moves, it needs 60 votes to move. It is called the legislative filibuster. But there is an exception to that, and it is a big exception. It is called budget reconciliation. It comes from the Budget Act of 1974. Under budget reconciliation, you only need 50 votes, not 60 votes. It is the biggest exception that exists to the filibuster rule.

Democrats, unfortunately, have 50 votes in this body. They have a majority in the House, and they have the White House. That means Democrats, using budget reconciliation—and it is clear, by the way, that you can raise the debt ceiling by using budget reconciliation—could have raised the debt ceiling in January. They didn't. They could have raised the debt ceiling in February. They didn't. They could have raised it in March or April or May or June, July, August, September. They didn't. We are in October. Democrats could have raised the debt ceiling today. They didn't. They could have done it with only Democratic votes, and there would not have been a single thing Republicans could have done to stop them. They know that. They don't dispute that.

So why are we facing a crisis? If, for 10 months, Democrats could have done this anytime they had wanted, why didn't they? Well, it is because there are at least some Democrats who realize that drowning the Nation in debt

and spending and taxes is not popular back home. The voters don't like it.

So, instead, Majority Leader SCHUMER has not once, not twice, but three times tried to move a legislative vehicle to raise the debt ceiling that requires 60 votes. He didn't have to do it. He could have done it using reconciliation and using only Democratic votes. He had the total power to do that, but he didn't want to do that. He wanted to use it—to move it forward in a way that required at least 10 Republicans to join with him. Why? There is one and only one reason for this. I would challenge any Senate Democrats to ask Majority Leader SCHUMER if there is any other reason he proffered for not doing what he could have done at any time, day or night. The only reason is to obscure accountability. The only reason is to blame some of that debt on Republicans so that Senate Democrats could claim: Hey, both parties did it.

What the Democrats are doing right now is unprecedented. It is radical. They know it, and they are scared of it. So what are we seeing instead? We are seeing CHUCK SCHUMER tell the American people: We are on the verge of a default. We are seeing Joe Biden threaten that the United States will default on our debt. We are seeing the Treasury Secretary threaten that the United States will default on our debt. Joe Biden's threats to default on the debt are wildly reckless and irresponsible.

Let me be clear so that no one is confused: The United States should never, ever, ever default on our debt—period. All 100 Senators in this Chamber agree with that. There is not a single Senator in either party who believes the United States should default on our debt.

Why does Joe Biden go on national television and threaten to default on the debt when he could have raised the debt ceiling anytime he wanted? Because he is playing a game of political brinksmanship, threatening a calamitous result on the American economy because he wants to browbeat Republicans into serving as a smokescreen to help hide the responsibility Democrats pay for their massive spending and debt.

I have got to say, for the last several months, I was proud of my party. The Republicans were united. We were standing together. We were standing as one. And every single Republican—all 50 Republicans were telling anyone who would listen: We will not participate in raising the debt ceiling. If the Democrats are going to raise trillions in spending, they need to raise the debt ceiling and own the debt that their reckless spending is producing. Our party was completely united.

The Republican leader and I—and he and I have had significant disagreements over the years, but on this question, we were in exactly the same place. We were saying exactly the same thing. Our conference has a wide range of views from conservatives to mod-

erates to libertarians. All 50 of us were on the same page. The Democrats have the power to raise the debt ceiling on their own. They are engaged in wildly reckless spending, and if they are going to do that, they need to be the ones to vote for this debt.

We were united for 2 months. Indeed, 46 of us signed a letter to CHUCK SCHUMER, I think 2 months ago, making clear what our position was. I helped write that letter. It was not a fringe position of a couple of members of the conference; we got 46 out of 50 Republican Senators to sign it. So SCHUMER knew. PELOSI knew. Biden knew. But they chose to engage in reckless brinksmanship.

Now, I believe the end result of this game of chicken was clear: that Democratic Leader SCHUMER was on a path to surrender. He was on a path to doing what he should have done a week ago or 2 weeks ago or 3 weeks ago or a month ago or 2 months ago, which is moving a reconciliation bill and raising the debt ceiling.

I can tell you there were Democratic Senators—multiple Democratic Senators—coming to me and coming to the other members of my party, saying: OK. How much time would it take to move a reconciliation bill? Can we get it done in time for the October 18 date that the Treasury Secretary has laid out?

To a person, Republicans answered: Yes, there is plenty of time, under the rules of reconciliation, to move forward. There is no barrier. You have all the time you need.

I believe Democratic Leader SCHUMER was on the verge of surrendering, and then unfortunately, yesterday, Republicans blinked. I think that was a mistake. I think that was the wrong decision.

Now, I will tell you, the reason Republican leadership made that decision to blink was because Senate Democrats threatened to nuke the filibuster, to eliminate the filibuster. I don't know if that threat was real. I don't know if they would have carried through on it or not. But I understand why Republican leadership blinked. Ending the filibuster would enable the Democrats to pass an even more radical agenda than the one they are doing right now. It would enable the Democrats to pass things that would profoundly alter this Nation, perhaps irreparably. So I understand why Republican leadership blinked, but I wish they had not. I wish they had not because I believe we were on the verge of victory.

The American people agreed with us. The Democratic position, on its face, was objectively unreasonable. Here is the Democratic position: We have complete power to raise the debt ceiling anytime we want, but the only way we will do it is if Republicans do it with us. Otherwise, we will default on the debt.

Even the Capitol Hill press corps—and, Mr. President, in your quieter moments, you will admit it leans very far

left—even the Capitol Hill press corps knew that was ridiculous.

So unfortunately, yesterday, we were on the verge of victory, but we turned that victory into defeat.

Now, let's be clear what the order of magnitude of this defeat is. We are soon going to vote on moving to take up the debt ceiling. The political games played by Democratic Leader SCHUMER may have prevailed in the short term by cajoling 10 or more Republicans to vote with the Democrats to allow a vote on the debt ceiling. I hope that doesn't happen. I hope we defeat that vote. I am certainly going to vote no, and I am urging my colleagues to vote no. But if 60 or more Senators vote to take up the vote, then we will see a clear divide. On the debt ceiling, all 50 Republicans will vote no. On the debt ceiling, all 50 Democrats will vote yes. We will see a clear divide. I wish it had happened without the political games, without the political theater, that Democratic leadership played.

One of the reasons I think it was a mistake for Republican leadership to give in to the demands, to the hostage-taking, to the political terrorism of the other side, is that it significantly hurts the credibility of the Republican conference. The Democratic leader is no doubt telling every Democratic Senator: You see, they won't hold their ground. They will give in. All we have to do is stand strong, and they won't stand and fight against us.

Now, I hope that proves nothing more than hot air. I hope that proves a bad estimation of what Republican Senators will do. I can tell you this conference remains absolutely united that the Bernie Sanders' socialist budget of \$5.5 trillion, with trillions in taxes, is wildly and recklessly irresponsible and would do massive damage to this country. I hope and believe we will stay united on that. But we could have stayed united on the debt ceiling as well. We could have stayed united in making clear that the Democrats had every ability to do this on their own, but sometimes in a poker game, a bluff wins the pot. In this case, to mix my metaphors, which would make my high school English teacher very angry, in the game of chicken, CHUCK SCHUMER won this game of chicken. As two trucks drove toward each other on a country road, one or the other was going to turn or you were going to have a lot of dead chickens.

I wish Republicans had not blinked. We shouldn't have done that, but the strategic mistake by our leadership should not distract from the fundamental divide in this body.

I don't know why it is the Democratic Senators look at this last election—an unbelievably close election—and conclude that there is no need for bipartisanship in the Senate, that their mandate is to ram through a radical and socialist agenda.

And let me be clear by the way: The first major bill the Democrats took up was a \$1.9 trillion spending bill, a so-

called COVID relief bill. I say so-called COVID relief because only 9 percent of the bill was healthcare spending on COVID. It was a liberal wish list, paying off special interests that support the Democrats.

You know, Mr. President, you and I were both at Joe Biden's inauguration. We sat on the steps of the Capitol. We heard President Biden give what I thought was a pretty good speech; a speech about unity, a speech about coming together, a speech about healing.

Sadly, that speech didn't even last the time it took for the words to be transmitted over the airways to the people listening at home.

It would have been easy for President Biden and Democrats to pass a bipartisan COVID relief bill—easy. There were Republicans eager to do so. And to show that that is not just empty posturing, that that is not just partisan language, last year, when we had a Republican majority in the Senate, we passed bipartisan COVID relief bills not once, not twice, not three times, not four times—five times. Five times.

When Republicans had the majority, we didn't ram through COVID relief bills that were hard partisan bills, but, instead, we worked together with the other side.

When Joe Biden, who promised healing and unity, the first big bill he had, he made a choice: Do I want to honor what I said, or do I want to give into the angry socialist left?

And he rammed through a bill—a \$1.9 trillion spending bill—that in the House of Representatives got zero Republican votes, and in the Senate got zero Republican votes.

And I have got to tell you, Senate Democrats didn't want a Republican vote. There wasn't even a minute of discussion of negotiation. There wasn't an attempt to make it bipartisan. It was: We have the power by the narrowest, narrowest margin, and we are going to abuse that power.

And, sadly, it hasn't changed. It has continued.

This Bernie Sanders, socialist budget—\$5.5 trillion—is reckless and partisan, and it will get zero Republican votes in the House, it will get zero Republican votes in the Senate—because the Democrats believe they have a short window to fundamentally transform this Nation and to destroy the free market system that has produced the greatest prosperity this Nation has ever seen.

This is tragic, and I, for one, will continue doing everything humanly possible to lead the fight to stop this radical agenda that threatens the lives, the safety, the security, the liberties, the constitutional rights, and the financial future of 29 million Texans.

Bankrupting our kids and grandkids is serious business, and the political games from the Democrats are meant to distract from that.

And let me note, finally, there is legislation I have supported all 9 years I

have served in this body. It is legislation introduced by the Senator from Pennsylvania, Senator TOOMEY, called the Full Faith and Credit Act, although I actually prefer a different name for it.

The name I prefer is the default prevention act. It is legislation that says, in the event the credit limit is not raised, the United States will never ever, ever default on the debt; that even without the credit limit being raised, there are tax revenues coming in every month.

So the default prevention act makes clear we will prioritize those tax revenues to interest on the debt, to paying our Active Duty military, and to Social Security and Medicare.

Government by crisis would end, or at least be substantially mitigated, if we pass the default prevention act.

Earlier today, I was on a radio program—Sean Hannity's radio program, where he played an interesting clip of Democrats all talking about debt ceiling denial or default denial.

And I would commend the other party. One of the things the Democrats do really well is message discipline. When they come up with talking points, it is remarkable. Every Democrat in these United States of America, from Joe Biden down to the county dog catcher, they repeat the exact same words.

So Sean Hannity played a whole series of just clips of Democrats using the identical talking points: Debt ceiling denial, default denial.

You know who is in denial is the Democrats. They are in denial that the debt ceiling exists. They are in denial of the \$29 trillion that is bankrupting our kids and grandkids.

And they like these crises. Why do I know they like these crises? Because they don't want to pass the default prevention act.

If the Democratic Senators who give speeches about how bad a default would be, if they actually believed that, we could come together today and we could ensure the citizens of Texas, the citizens of Virginia, the citizens of Utah that there will never ever, ever, ever be a default of our debt.

But if we did that, it would mean that Senator SCHUMER and NANCY PELOSI and President Biden couldn't engage in the kind of theatrics, the kind of reckless brinksmanship that we have seen over the last several weeks. That would jeopardize their radical agenda.

I hope and pray that this body, the Senate, serves as the last bulwark to stop the radical socialist agenda that Washington Democrats are trying to ram through.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I missed most of what Senator CRUZ said, but I think I have a general idea of what he was going to say.

So what is this all about tonight? Why are we here?

So the bottom line is we have a debt ceiling increase that is coming due under our law. The debt ceiling has been dealt with numerous times since I have been here.

What is this all about?

My Democratic colleagues—we worked together to pass a \$1.2 trillion bill for roads, bridges, ports, and electrical vehicles. I was 1 of 19 Republicans. Made sense to me.

The reason we have got a debt ceiling problem beyond the normal course of business is that my Democratic colleagues, through reconciliation, are going to keep on spending from \$3½ to \$5 trillion that has got zero to do, in my view, with infrastructure as we know it. It is more about expanding the size and scope of government.

They have every right to pursue this, and we, as Republicans, have every right to make it hard.

So Senator MCCONNELL has been saying for 2 months now that if you are going to spend the money through reconciliation, you need to raise the debt limit through reconciliation. And there has been a change of heart here at the last minute, but we will be doing this again in December.

So here is my point: I think you should do that. I think the reconciliation process is available to you. I think you should be required to use it, and I don't intend to help you spend any more of this money.

Now, what does reconciliation mean?

It means that you can do it by yourself through a process that allows 50 votes, not 60.

As Budget ranking member, I am willing to waive the 3 days. I am willing to try to make the process less painful. But the point is that you need to own this, and that was our position until recently.

We will be doing this again in December, and this idea that the rules of the Senate may change because of this issue or any other issue—I want to get something off my chest.

When President Trump was President, we had the House and the Senate, and there was enormous pressure on Republicans to change the rules to get everything we wanted, and a lot of Democratic colleagues standing up for the constitutional filibuster—legislative filibuster. We sent a letter with over 60-something names on it basically saying to the leaders of the Senate: Let's don't make the Senate the House.

All of a sudden, you are now in charge of 50-50, and there is a constant stream of threats, coming from the President this time, to change the rules of the Senate to raise the debt limit because you don't want to use reconciliation.

If you have no more respect for the Senate than that, go ahead and change the rules.

I am not going to live the rest of my political life under threat. I am asking no more of you than I ask of myself.

So if the reason the Republican Party has changed its position is because we think somehow what we were

doing would put the Senate in peril, well, then, the Senate was in peril a lot more than we thought it was.

It never entered my mind to go to Democratic colleagues and say: If you don't do a few things that I need to have to get people off my ass at home, then I may have to do carve-outs of this and that.

I didn't do it because I don't think it is the right thing to do. I am not going to tolerate it now.

Now, I will work with you when it makes sense, but what you are doing makes no sense to me, and you need to pay a political price for it under the rules.

I am not doing anything illegal. The Republican Party wasn't doing anything backdoor. We said there is a way forward on the debt ceiling. It is reconciliation. And that is the process you should use because of what you are doing in terms of spending all this money, and we are just not going to be part of making it easy for you to spend all this money.

And here we are. Ten Republicans are going to be voting here pretty soon. I will not be one of them.

And to my Republican colleagues: I understand where you are coming from. I don't fault you for your vote. You know, I was 1 of 19 Republicans that voted for an infrastructure package. A lot of you didn't agree. Some of you were vocal about it. I can take criticism from within my party and without. I try to be respectful.

I will be respectful tonight, but here is our problem as Republicans: We said for 2 months we are going to do one thing, and at the end we have done another.

What does it really matter?

I don't know. I think it matters to the people who listen to us and have some faith in us.

So to my Democratic colleagues: If we get through the night, we will be doing this again. And I promise you, come December, I will be doing everything I can to give you a reasonable reconciliation process to make it as painless as possible in terms of process, but this is what you should be doing because this is what you are doing to the country.

And to my Republican colleagues: We will have another bite at this apple, and we need to decide who we are and what we believe. And if we are not going to pursue this strategy anymore, let's just tell the people of the country up front it was a bad idea, we shouldn't have done it. I think it wasn't a bad idea, but let's not mislead people here. Let's not say one thing and do another.

So I am hoping that we can find a way to do some things together before now and 2022. There are some things on Section 230. The colleague, the Presiding Officer, is one of the best people in the world to do things with if you are looking for bipartisanship on immigration. We have got a broken border, we have got DACA at risk. Maybe we can do a small deal on immigration.

But the point for me is this was a self-inflicted wound, and we need not do this again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, we had a number of Senators come to the floor over the last couple of hours talking about some of the problems that we face as a country. They are real, they are serious, and they are being made more severe still and more severe than they need to be by virtue of the step that the Senate is, I fear, about to take.

When we extend the debt limit without any plan as to how you are not going to be back in the same position in just a few more months and you are raising it or, as we have been doing it lately, just suspending the debt limit, you are creating sort of a debt limit Mardi Gras, an era in which any amount of additional borrowing is permitted during that period.

It becomes especially dangerous during times like this one, where we are spending not just to the tune of billions, not just to the tune of hundreds of billions, not just to the tune of a trillion more than we take in, but to the tune of many trillions more than we take in each and every year. That is what is hurting poor and middle-class American families. It is a reverse Robin Hood that is so perverse. It is a reverse Robin Hood effect. We are effectively borrowing—stealing from the poor and giving it to the rich and well connected, and we are giving the praise that accompanies it to the politicians who clamor for attention as a result of other people spending other people's money that other people will have to work for to earn back and to pay it back. Some of those people aren't old enough to vote yet; some of them have not been born; and some will be born years from now to parents who have not met.

It is not fair for us to do that, and that is why this isn't just another debt ceiling debate. It is not just another debt limit discussion. This one is so much bigger than it has been in the past. The effects are being felt so much more directly than they have at any other time in the past when we have raised this.

I know that this can come across to a lot of people as an intensely partisan place. I understand how people can think that. In some ways it is. Everything about it reminds people of that, especially the visual images that they see. You know, we have got 100 desks in here; 50 of them are on that side of the aisle, and 50 of them are on this side of the aisle. And there are a number of issues on which there is a division of thought, a set of pretty deep disagreements that sometimes lead to votes that break down more or less along partisan lines. There is a lot of that.

In my view, it doesn't reflect a petulant desire to disagree for the sake of being disagreeable. It tends to reflect

something a little deeper, a little more heartfelt, and, more than anything, it reflects a genuine difference of opinion among the people we represent.

We don't like to disagree around here. In fact, I like agreeing. I don't like being disagreeable with those on the other side of the aisle. Many of my very favorite people in the U.S. Senate are people who don't share my party affiliation and who are at the opposite end of the ideological spectrum for me. It makes it that much more fun to work with them because there are a number of areas where we can and where we do agree.

So there are ways in which this place is portrayed in the entertainment media and in the news media that are accurate, insofar as they show this sometimes heated debate that occurs across party lines. There is some of that that occurs. It is an incomplete picture because there are a lot of areas where we agree, where we reach conclusions that are good, and we reach them together.

There is another feature of that, though, that is very seldom portrayed in the news media, in the entertainment media, or elsewhere in our society and in our culture, and it worries me. And that is about the areas where there is bipartisanship—a bipartisanship that maybe is good for people in this Chamber, but leaves a lot of people out in the cold. It is good for politicians whether they have an R or a D after their name, but it is bad for everyone else, especially the poor and middle class. That part concerns me. It worries me a lot. You know, we didn't get to this point, going into the pandemic at the peak of an economic cycle, where we were spending a trillion dollars a year more than we were taking in—we didn't get to that point without a lot of bipartisanship.

We didn't get to the point of trillion-dollar annual deficits without a whole lot of Republicans and a whole lot of Democrats agreeing together to spend a trillion dollars more each year than we were taking in with record-low unemployment, with strong economic growth. We were still borrowing that much. Twenty-five percent—\$1 out of every \$4 spent by the government—was borrowed. There is a lot of bipartisanship in that, but not all bipartisanship is equal and not all bipartisanship is good for hard-working poor and middle-class Americans. Some of it is downright harmful.

We didn't get to the point where we spent last year more than double what we brought in. We brought in \$3 trillion, miraculously, during the height of the pandemic, and yet we spent \$6.6 trillion last year. We didn't get to that point without a whole lot of bipartisanship and without a whole lot of Republicans agreeing with a whole lot of Democrats to spend that much more than we had.

We didn't get to be almost \$30 trillion in debt without a whole lot of bipartisanship. That was a whole lot of Republicans and a whole lot of Democrats

agreeing to do something that might have felt good in the moment—might have done a lot of good in the moment—but didn't take into account the forgotten man and the forgotten woman in the picture. The poor and middle-class family that finds it harder to get by, to buy everything from housing to healthcare, from gas to groceries, it didn't take them into account. So, no, not all bipartisanship makes sense. Not all bipartisanship has the best interests of the American people at heart.

Sometimes you need someone in the room to express hesitation, to express reluctance. Sometimes it is one or two, and sometimes it is half. That is why I was elated. I was pleased when a few months ago nearly every Member of the Senate Republican conference, 46 out of the 50 of us, signed a letter.

Now, the letter explained a few things, a few things that I think are pretty important to remember. It explained, for example, that we don't ever want to see the Federal Government default on its debt, pointing out that not raising the debt limit is a different decision than a decision to default on the debt. We bring in more than enough money every month and every year to meet the debt service obligations of every month and every year—a significant amount more, in fact.

Sometimes changing the prioritization of spending can allow us to borrow less than we would otherwise. So nearly every Member of the Republican Senate conference signed this letter acknowledging that we don't want to default. And we do find ourselves in an untenable position in which Democrats are wanting to pass a \$3.5 trillion bill that really, according to the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, would end up costing more like \$5 trillion. And we don't think it is right in that circumstance to just suspend the debt ceiling and that we are not going to do it.

So we signed this letter. We said, we, the undersigned Republican Senators are letting Senate Democrats know and the American public know that we will not vote to increase the debt ceiling, whether that comes through a stand-alone bill, a continuing resolution, or any other vehicle. This is a problem created by Democratic spending, and Democrats will have to accept sole responsibility for facilitating.

I want to be clear. It is not saying that the underlying problem was created entirely by Democrats. But it is saying that what the Democrats were about to do and are still planning to do is the driving reason why we are unwilling to just suspend the debt ceiling. Remember, when we are suspending it, we are not just raising it by a certain amount. We are creating a period of debt ceiling Mardi Gras, a period in which any amount of additional borrowing is allowed under the law. And when you have got one party that

wants to add to the tune of many trillions of dollars to our already out-of-control debt, one that is now in the range of about 125 percent of our GDP, that is a problem. It was not unreasonable for us to make that commitment. It would have been unreasonable for us not to make that commitment. Sometimes you need someone who is willing to say: Maybe this isn't such a good idea.

I commend those who signed the letter. I implore all who signed it to remember that commitment, to remember it to their voters. I don't think it helps for us to just suspend the debt ceiling anyway, and I don't think it helps to dismiss this simply as a cloture vote.

The point of the letter was that the Democrats have the ability to do this on their own through the reconciliation process. If they want to do it, they should use that process. They haven't used that process. In light of that, we have no business facilitating it.

I see we have an additional colleague here who is interested in speaking. In deference to him, I am going to let him proceed.

Before I do so, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a copy of that letter, dated August 10, 2021, signed by 46 Republican Senators.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, August 10, 2021.

TO OUR FELLOW AMERICANS: Since taking total control of the United States federal government, with the Presidency, a narrow majority in the House, and Vice President Harris providing the deciding vote in an evenly split Senate, Democrats have embarked on a massive and unprecedented deficit spending spree. Without a single Republican vote, they passed a \$1.9 trillion "Covid relief" bill in March even though \$1 trillion was still unspent from previous bipartisan Covid relief bills.

Now they have passed a \$3.5 trillion Budget Resolution, again without a single Republican vote. The non-partisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget has calculated that a more honest score of this budget resolution will likely exceed \$5 trillion. Senate Democrats shamelessly estimate their tax and spending plan will result in a \$45 trillion debt level by 2031.

In order for this spending to occur, our nation's debt limit will have to be increased significantly. Because Democrats are responsible for the spending, they need to take responsibility for increasing the debt ceiling. They have total control of the government, and the unilateral ability to raise the debt ceiling to accommodate their unilateral spending plans. Indeed, Democrats have the ability to raise the debt limit through the Budget Resolution by introducing appropriate language in the upcoming reconciliation process (or a subsequent reconciliation). Doing so would not require a single Republican vote, and would appropriately require each and every Democrat to take responsibility for their out-of-control spending.

We should not default on our debts under any circumstances. If Democrats threaten a default, it will only be because they refuse to

vote for the debt ceiling increase necessitated by their own irresponsible spending. Democrats, at any time, have the power through reconciliation to unilaterally raise the debt ceiling, and they should not be allowed to pretend otherwise.

We, the undersigned Republican Senators, are letting Senate Democrats and the American public know that we will not vote to increase the debt ceiling, whether that increase comes through a stand-alone bill, a continuing resolution, or any other vehicle. This is a problem created by Democrat spending. Democrats will have to accept sole responsibility for facilitating it.

Mitch McConnell, Mitt Romney, Mike

Lee, Patrick J. Toomey, Marsha Blackburn, John Barrasso, James Inhofe, Steve Daines, Deb Fischer, John Cornyn, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Lindsey Graham, Ted Cruz, Mike Crapo, John Thune, Chuck Grassley, John Boozman, Ben Sasse, Tom Cotton, Roger F. Wicker, Roger Marshall, Bill Cassidy, Mike Rounds, Ron Johnson, Josh Hawley, Cynthia M. Lummis, Tommy Tuberville, Rick Scott, Thom Tillis, Rand Paul, James Lankford, Mike Braun, Marco Rubio, Roy Blunt, Richard Burr, Tim Scott, James E. Risch, Bill Hagerty, Joni Ernst, Dan Sullivan, Shelley Moore Capito, Kevin Cramer, John Hoeven, Jerry Moran, Todd Young, Rob Portman.

Mr. LEE. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, first of all, I want to thank the Senator from Utah for his courtesy.

Thank you, Senator LEE.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2196

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, Americans across the country, people around the world, and myself believe that in this room, they know that President Biden is failing at our southern border. That is not a secret. We have had months of record-shattering numbers of illegal immigrants crossing our southern border.

We have had unfathomable amounts of illegal drugs produced by Mexican cartels—meth, fentanyl, heroin—coming into our country. It is making its way across that southern border and into States like my home State of Montana.

Many of you have probably heard me say that Montana is a northern border State with a southern border crisis. Well, that is true. The crisis at our southern border, created by President Biden, is out of control, and we all know we must do something to change the status quo to protect our families and our communities.

But what I am here to talk about today is how President Biden is also failing at our northern border—the border between the United States and Canada. While our southern border remains wide open to illegal drugs, illegal immigrants—many potentially COVID-positive or unvaccinated—our northern border remains closed because of President Biden.

The hypocrisy here is stunning. It is infuriating. It is unexplainable. There is no reason or rationale behind President Biden's decision. It can't be because of COVID-19 or because of vaccination rates. Canadians are over 80

percent vaccinated—80 percent. Haitians, on the other hand, coming across the southern border, have less than a 1-percent COVID vaccination rate. So if COVID-19 and the vaccination rates were the issue, then why did President Trudeau lift his restrictions and start allowing Americans to travel to Canada on August 9? It makes no sense.

President Biden is prohibiting Canadians from traveling into the United States. They can't come into Montana.

Who is paying the price for President Biden's hypocrisy? Montanans are paying the price. Montana families and Montana businesses are paying the price. Montana border communities and northern border communities across the country are paying the price. President Biden's inexplicable policies are hurting Montana's economy, destroying jobs, shuttering businesses, and hurting your families.

In fact, let me give you an example. Great Falls, MT, which proudly calls Malmstrom Air Force Base its home, reported that they have seen a 20- to 25-percent decrease in revenue due to the continued border closure. This is, sadly, the story we are hearing from many communities and business owners across Montana as Canadians are no longer able to come visit our beautiful State.

This has been going on for far too long. Since the President will not do the right thing, to use some good old-fashioned Montana commonsense to listen to Montanans and open our northern border, I have introduced a bill to do just that.

And, by the way, I have seen some of my colleagues across the aisle join me in calling on this administration to reopen the northern border, and I am grateful for that, but actions speak louder than words.

Today, we have the opportunity to stop putting the power in the hands of President Biden to make the right decision here—he hasn't made it—because we know that won't happen. Today, we can pass my bill, called the Restoring the Northern Border Travel Act, and require the Biden administration to reopen the northern border. Let's help revitalize Montana. How about the other northern border States? Let's put an end to this irrational closure and this hypocrisy. A wide open southern border and a closed northern border, it doesn't make any sense.

So I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in passing my bill.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 2196 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I appreciate my colleague from Montana's efforts to get the northern border travel back to normal. I understand that this is an important issue in Montana, and it is important to families along our northern border, not only Montana but across our Nation.

I just want to flag a couple of things, if I can. This legislation has not been considered just yet in the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on which I serve and formerly chaired. Given the importance of this issue, I will be more than happy to work with my colleague from Montana on a path forward from this time.

I am concerned, having said that, that this legislation, as is, is a bit too broad and could have unintended consequences, including making it harder to address future challenges at our borders. Having said that, fortunately, the Biden administration is already taking action to safely and responsibly reopen our border, including the recent announcement to expand the eligibility of travelers to enter the U.S. via air travel that will go into effect—I believe it is next month.

Again, I appreciate my colleague's efforts here and am ready to work with him, as I said to him just a few minutes ago, more than willing to work with him on this bill within the Homeland Security Committee where I serve as a senior Democrat, and we can look at changes to refine the legislation and help build bipartisan support for it.

Unfortunately, however, tonight I have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I am grateful for the support the Senator from Delaware has offered here. The reason I am down here asking for the unanimous consent this evening is to provide a sense of urgency to try to get this done now.

President Trudeau opened up the Canadian border on August 9, and President Biden has kept the border shut down to Canadians coming in during that entire time. It doesn't make sense. COVID is a concern. We agree on that. However, it should not be a concern at the U.S.-Canadian border, with Canadians having an 80-percent vaccination rate.

Canada began letting fully vaccinated Americans cross the border 2 months ago. Canada has a higher vaccination rate than the United States. I find it a bit hypocritical to talk about the concern about vaccination rates and relating that to the northern border and, at the same time, the southern border is wide open with vaccination rates, for example, of Haitians of less than 1 percent.

So anyway, we want to get this resolved. We are seeing businesses and families suffer in northern border States. This administration continues

to have a wide open southern border policy while keeping the northern border closed. Montana can't figure that one out. Many of us who live in northern border States see the same thing. The hypocrisy has to end. The travel at the U.S.-Canadian border needs to be restored immediately.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to yield back the remaining time on both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

All time is yielded back.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 1301, an act to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans, with amendment No. 3847.

Charles E. Schumer, Ron Wyden, Jack Reed, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Tina Smith, Amy Klobuchar, Jacky Rosen, Christopher Murphy, Chris Van Hollen, Jeanne Shaheen, Mazie Hirono, Tim Kaine, Debbie Stabenow, Angus S. King, Jr., Robert P. Casey, Jr., Jeff Merkley.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 1301, an act to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans with amendment No. 3847 offered by the Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 61, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 411 Leg.]

YEAS—61

Baldwin	Cortez Masto	Manchin
Barrasso	Duckworth	Markey
Bennet	Durbin	McConnell
Blumenthal	Feinstein	Menendez
Blunt	Gillibrand	Merkley
Booker	Hassan	Murkowski
Brown	Heinrich	Murphy
Cantwell	Hickenlooper	Murray
Capito	Hirono	Ossoff
Cardin	Kaine	Padilla
Carper	Kelly	Peters
Casey	King	Portman
Collins	Klobuchar	Reed
Coons	Leahy	Rosen
Cornyn	Lujan	Rounds

Sanders	Smith	Warnock
Schatz	Stabenow	Warren
Schumer	Tester	Whitehouse
Shaheen	Thune	Wyden
Shelby	Van Hollen	
Sinema	Warner	

NAYS—38

Blackburn	Hagerty	Risch
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeben	Rubio
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Cotton	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cruz	Lankford	Tillis
Daines	Lee	Toomey
Ernst	Lummis	Tuberville
Fischer	Marshall	Wicker
Graham	Moran	Young
Grassley	Paul	

NOT VOTING—1

Burr

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). On this vote, the yeas are 61, the nays are 38.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, in a few moments, the Senate will pass an extension of the debt limit through early December, avoiding a first-ever, Republican-manufactured default on the national debt.

On Monday morning, I said we needed to pass a bill to address the debt limit by the end of the week, and that is exactly what we did.

Republicans played a dangerous and risky partisan game, and I am glad that their brinkmanship did not work. For the good of America's families, for the good of our economy, Republicans must recognize in the future that they should approach fixing the debt limit in a bipartisan way.

What is needed now is a long-term solution so we don't go through this risky drama every few months, and we hope Republicans will join in enacting a long-term solution to the debt limit in December. We are ready to work with them.

Leader MCCONNELL and Senate Republicans insisted they wanted a solution to the debt ceiling, but said Democrats must raise it alone by going through a drawn-out, convoluted, and risky reconciliation process. That was simply unacceptable to my caucus, and, yesterday, Senate Republicans finally realized that their obstruction was not going to work.

I thank very much my Democratic colleagues for our showing our unity in solving this Republican-manufactured crisis. Despite immense opposition from Leader MCCONNELL and the Members of his conference, our caucus held together and we pulled our country back from the cliff's edge that Republicans tried to push us over.

This is a temporary but necessary and important fix. I appreciate that, at the end of the day, we were able to raise the debt limit without a convoluted and unnecessary reconciliation process that, until today, the Republican leader claimed was the only way to address the debt limit.

Let me say that again. Today's vote is proof positive that the debt limit can be addressed without going through the reconciliation process, just as Democrats have been saying for months.

The solution is for Republicans to either join us in raising the debt limit or stay out of the way and let Democrats address the debt limit ourselves. Those are the two choices, and it is very simple.

Senate Democrats want a long-term solution to the debt limit to make sure financial markets remain stable and our economic recovery stays on track. America's full faith and credit must never be used as a political bargaining chip. I hope my Republican colleagues relent from trying to make it one when we revisit this issue soon.

So now that Republican brinkmanship has relented, Senate Democrats will focus on passing the Build Back Better agenda so we can finally build up ladders of opportunity for people to climb up to the middle class, to help people already in the middle class stay there, to fight climate change, and create the good-paying jobs of tomorrow and rekindle that sunny American optimism that has long been the course of our national identity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Cloture having been invoked, the motion to refer and the amendments pending thereto fall.

AMENDMENT WITHDRAWN

Under the previous order, amendment No. 3848 is withdrawn and all postcloture time is expired.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

The question occurs on agreeing to the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 1301 with amendment No. 3847.

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 412 Leg.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—48

Barrasso	Boozman	Capito
Blunt	Braun	Cassidy

Collins	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Cornyn	Inhofe	Rounds
Cotton	Johnson	Rubio
Cramer	Kennedy	Sasse
Crapo	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Lee	Scott (SC)
Daines	Lummis	Shelby
Ernst	Marshall	Sullivan
Fischer	McConnell	Thune
Graham	Moran	Tillis
Grassley	Murkowski	Toomey
Hagerty	Paul	Tuberville
Hawley	Portman	Wicker
Hoeben	Risch	Young

NOT VOTING—2

Blackburn Burr

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 259, Gustavo A. Gelpi, of Puerto Rico, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher Murphy, Gary C. Peters, Michael F. Bennet, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Benjamin L. Cardin, Patty Murray, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Duckworth, Patrick J. Leahy, Robert Menendez, Bernard Sanders, Mark R. Warner, Tina Smith, Richard J. Durbin, Ben Ray Lujan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Gustavo A. Gelpi, of Puerto Rico, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) would have voted "nay".

(Mr. OSSOFF assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 39, as follows: